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Subject: Wildfire Update - Bitterroot NF - July 18th
Attachments: Fire Fact Sheet 7-18-18.docx



FACT SHEET

Wildfire Update

July 18, 2018

Contact: Public Affairs Officer – Tod McKay
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What: 2 new fires
Discovered: July 17th
Location: Bitterroot National Forest – West Fork Ranger District

Summary: Firefighters are working on 2 wildfires caused by lightning and discovered yesterday by fire lookouts on the forest. Both fires are burning in remote locations on the West Fork Ranger District and there are no structures threatened or closures at this time.

The Reynolds Lake Fire was estimated at 11 acres this morning but has grown substantially this afternoon pushed by gusty winds. It is located on the border of the Bitterroot and Salmon-Challis National Forest near Reynolds Lake Trailhead - approx. 10 miles southwest of Painted Rocks Lake. It is 0% contained. See below for more details.

The Haystack Fire is 1/10 acre, staffed with 2 firefighters who were flown into the wilderness last night and hiked to the fire's location. It is near Haystack Mountain in the Frank Church Wilderness in Idaho, one mile west of the Magruder Ranger Station. The fire was contained this morning.

Resources on Fire: There are currently 30 firefighters from the West Fork Ranger District, Bitterroot Helitack, and Bitterroot Hotshots assigned to the Reynolds Lake Fire which is being actively suppressed, under a full suppression strategy. There is also multiple aircraft (both helicopters and fixed wing) which are assisting with bucket work and retardant drops to help control the spread.

Additional Resources: One 20-person Hotshot Crew and a 20-person (Type 2) initial attack crew have been ordered and are in route to the Reynolds Lake Fire.

Planned Actions: Firefighters are working to construct line around the perimeter, starting at the heel of the fire and working up the flanks. Helicopters are using buckets to drop water in

key locations to check fire spread and aviation will continue to be utilized as needed to suppress the fire.

Terrain Info: The fire is burning in remote and rugged terrain, in heavy fuels (timber) with dead standing and downed timber.

Fire Behavior: Torching and spotting, aided by winds. The fire burned actively throughout the night.

Weather: A weak weather disturbance will move through the area today with sustained westerly winds of 20-25mph and gusts up to 35mph.

Special/Safety Concerns: Firefighter safety remains a priority. Numerous snags are in the area which presents a safety threat to firefighters in high wind situations.

Fire Danger: Fire Danger was raised to "high" today on the Bitterroot National Forest. When fire danger is "high" fires will start from most causes. The fires will spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. All fine dead fuels ignite readily and unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. High intensity burning may develop on slopes, or in concentrations of fine fuels. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are hit hard and fast while small.

Open burning was closed last week in Ravalli County due to increased fire risks. Camp and cooking fires are still allowed.

Prevention Message: Fire managers would like to remind visitors and recreationalist to be extremely careful while visiting the forest. Pay attention to those items that may cause a spark, such as chains on a trailer. Ensure that all campfires are dead out by adding water and stirring dirt into hot coals until cold. If your campfire is still hot then it is too hot leave.

2018 Fire Season: Firefighters have responded to 4 lightning wildfires this summer on the Bitterroot National Forest.

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